

Punch (=Pulcino, Pulcinella) is only a Neapolitan rendering of Maccus, a character in the atellans. "Maccus," in Etruscan, meant a little cock.¹ Christian antiphonal singing, like the Greek mystery acts of Dionysus, helped to develop the drama.² In the first centuries of the Christian era "obscenity dominated the theater." "It was no longer a school of patriotism, recalling the heroes of the early ages or criticising the misdoings of contemporaries. It was a scene of vice and corruption for actors and spectators. There was nothing represented but the adventures of deceived husbands, adulteries, intrigues of libertines, incidents in lupanars. The only characters represented were shameless women and effeminate men. The most shameful things were exhibited. Everything which ought to be respected was there degraded. Virtue was mocked and the gods were derided. The actor caused the taste for evil things to penetrate the mind of the spectator; he stimulated ignoble and criminal passions, and, familiar as he was with vice, he blushed sometimes at the shameful role which he was forced to play before the crowd."³

636. «The Suffering Christ." "Pseudo-Querolus." In the fourth century the Christians tried to use the theater for their purposes. The drama *The Suffering Christ* is attributed to Gregory of Nazianz. It represents the passion of Jesus as understood by the Nicene theologians. It consists of twelve hundred and seventy-three verses taken more or less exactly from the tragedies of Euripides and patched together. Lintilhac⁴ says it is now the accepted opinion that it cannot be of remoter origin than the eleventh century, so that the most noteworthy fact

about it would be that it is a Greek liturgical play of even date with the earliest western plays of that class. In it the Virgin Mary is a pagan woman, who uses verses of Hecuba and Medea, and thinks of suicide.⁵ Another play of the fourth century, which is mentioned as important in the history of the drama, is the *Pseudo-Querolus*. It is an imitation of Plautus. Querolus

¹ Magnin, *Origines* ^ 47.

² D'Ancona, I, 45.

³ Schmidt, *La Societe Civile dans le Monde Romain*, 98.

⁴ *Theatre Serieux du M. A.*, 13 note. ⁵ D'Ancona, I, 372.